

PM: Solutions from within Asean

South China Sea issues must not be decided by outside forces

KUALA LUMPUR: Issues related to the South China Sea must be resolved within Asean, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"We want it to be resolved within Asean and with our partners in the region.

"The moment (the issue) seems to be imposed and dictated by outside forces, things will become more problematic and tense," he said at the East Asia Summit (EAS), one of the meetings on the sidelines of the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits.

He said extensive discussions were held on the South China Sea and all parties have agreed to formulate a code of conduct.

Several countries have overlapping territorial and maritime claims on the South China Sea, which has led to rising tensions.

The "Code of Conduct" for the South China Sea is a proposed legally binding agreement between China and South-East Asian nations to reduce tension and prevent conflict.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the need to renew a shared



purpose among EAS members.

"We promote principled and forward-looking engagements, continue advocating dialogue over coercion, balance over binaries and cooperation over confrontation.

"We affirm our stand on global peace and security for multilateralism and international law," he said.

On Palestine, the Prime Minister welcomed US President Donald Trump's plan to end the Gaza war, but said that efforts must be continued and closely monitored to ensure lasting peace.

"It is an important and critical beginning to stop the madness, genocide and atrocities," he said.

Trump had presented a 20-point plan to end the conflict in Gaza, outlining a detailed framework to achieve peace in the region.



Unity: Anwar giving opening remarks during the 20th East Asia Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. - FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

On Myanmar, Anwar said Asean remains committed towards the implementation of the five-point consensus.

"I urge colleagues to continue engagement and allow them to conduct the affairs of the State of Myanmar through their own national mechanisms," he said.

On another matter, he said the presence of Brazil and South

Africa at the summit represents a new conscience of democratic transition and strong support for multilateralism.

"We want Africa to very much be a part of these engagements, expanding our trading links, investments and geopolitical arrangements.

"Similarly with Brazil, by extending our multilateral

arrangements and trade investments, and I believe within the whole of East Asia," he said.

Brazil and South Africa, represented by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and President Cyril Ramaphosa, respectively, were invited to the summit as guests of Asean Chair, Malaysia.

At the Asean Plus Three Summit with China, South Korea and Japan, the Prime Minister said the grouping and its dialogue partners must double down on engagement and cooperation.

Anwar said the purpose is to ensure fair growth, widely shared prosperity and for progress to bring peace.

"We must prepare our youth and women for an East Asia region that is sustainable, inclusive and interconnected," he said at the 28th Asean Plus Three Summit.